

The Avery Coonley School

Magazine

Winter 2015



Architecture

The Avery Coonley School

2014-2015 Board of Trustees

Chair of the Board
Patrick Fry '80

Vice Chair
Amy Louis

Treasurer
Jeffrey Mueller

Assistant Treasurer
William Atwood

Secretary
Shannon Weinberger

Assistant Secretary
Mary Ellen Bull '79

Past Chair
James Crouthamel

Trustees
Anu Asthana
Brian Gilmartin
Sue Gould
John Grube
Jacqueline Gupta
John Harrast
William Heun
Beth Horio
Patricia Huebner
Antonia Pritchard
Catherine Slark

Honorary Trustees
Peter Doris, MD
Leslie Hindman '68
Fred Krehbiel '55

Head of School
Paul Druzinsky

Our Philosophy

We believe that the joy and excitement of learning must begin early in life. We place a high premium on developing the desire in our students to become critical thinkers and independent, life-long learners.

We assist our students in realizing their intellectual, emotional, social, creative, and physical potential by promoting academic achievement, character development, self-reliance, self-confidence, independent thought, and personal fitness.

We recognize and are sensitive to the unique needs of gifted children. Within a traditional structure, we provide acceleration and enrichment, and foster a supportive atmosphere that provides opportunities for creativity, problem-solving, and risk-taking.

We believe that diversity is the foundation for a strong, competent, and compassionate community. Therefore, we value racial, religious, economic, and cultural diversity in our student body, faculty, and staff.

We strive to build a community that encourages understanding and mutual respect and nurtures appreciation of the individual, civility, gratitude, honesty, kindness and consideration, responsibility, and volunteerism.

Approved by The Avery Coonley School Board of Trustees on January 21, 2014.

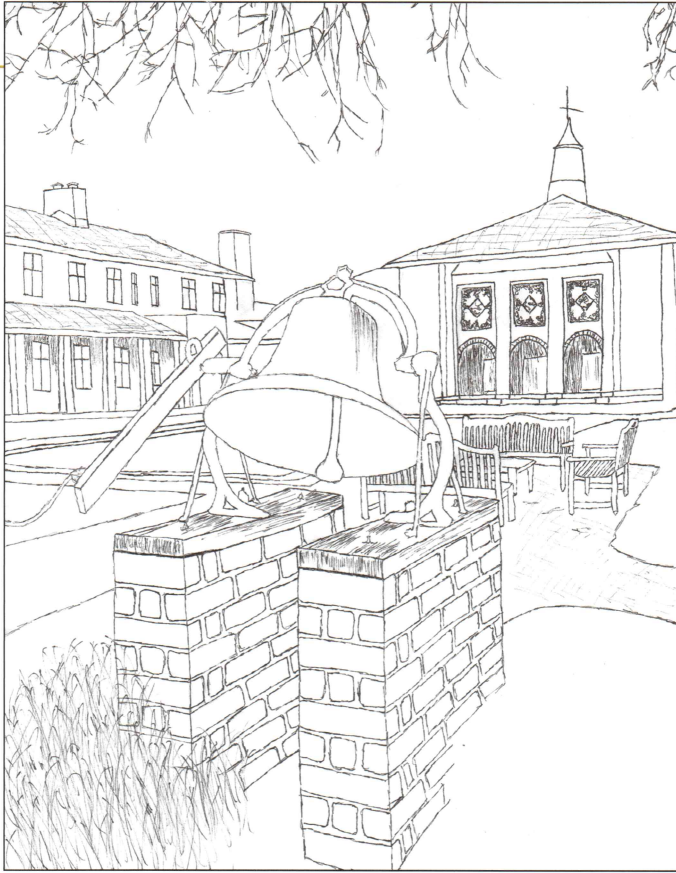
Mission Statement

The Avery Coonley School is an independent school whose mission is to provide a learning environment that is appropriate both for academically bright and gifted children who are motivated to learn and have demonstrated the potential for the scholastic achievement necessary to succeed in a challenging academic program, in order that they may become positive, productive, and respectful members of society.

Approved by the Board of Trustees on January 21, 2014.

*Front Cover, Table of Contents, and Back Cover:
The campus scenes were drawn using a pen and ink technique by Emma Wilson '13 (front cover); Kara Troe '15 (table of contents); and Olivia Krylov (back cover).*

Table of Contents



From the Editor and the Head of School

Dear Readers	2
From the Head of School	3

Features: Continuity

The School Building Articulates with Education	4
A Portrait of the Architect	10
Building Blocks: A Story of Bamboo in Bali, Brick in the 'Burbs, and Solid Foundations ...	14
A Cornerstone: Architecture and Education	20
Sleepless in Downers Grove: Raising Awareness for the Homeless	24
Beauty in the Details	28

Around Campus

Voici Nos Amis Français!	30
Favorite Memories	30
Walk This Way – The Mile Club	30

Alumni News and Events

Class Notes	31
-------------------	----

Dear Readers,

Dear Readers,

Last year, as we considered various aspects of the ACS Way, we asked the question – How would things change if the school moved to a new location?

Imagine all of our ACS teachers and students, our curriculum, our textbooks and technology – all of the “moveable” pieces of The Avery Coonley School – at your local middle school. Much of course would be the same, or at least very similar. Some things would depend on the new location. Are there maple trees nearby? A sledding hill? A room large enough for the entire school to gather? But no matter what the new space offered, at least a few elements of that multi-faceted ACS Way would no doubt be missing, or at least significantly different.

In this issue we consider in greater detail the nature and extent of those unique parts. Which aspects of our physical space are so distinctive, and so significant to our very essence, that their absence would leave a painful, noteworthy hole? And perhaps more interestingly – why? What is so special about those distinguishing pieces?

It is also possible, of course, that these are not the correct questions at all. It may be that it is a mistake to think of the ACS buildings and grounds in terms of its component parts. Perhaps no one single feature – not the Cloister, nor the rock pond, learning spaces, fireplaces, or forest – is absolutely critical to who we are and what we do. Instead, it might be that the emotional and psychological impact of this physical place, and all of the memories that emanate from it and that are connected to it – maybe all of that mysterious mass of the ACS collective conscious comes from – simply, exclusively, grandly – the whole.

Fortunately, we do not have to arrive at a definitive answer. Whether it is the individual elements that give ACS its distinct character, or some larger sense of perfect balance between function and beauty, it is enough for our purposes here to agree that there really is something very special, almost magical, about the natural and created spaces of The Avery Coonley School. It is this magical sense that we explore in this issue.

We begin with a reprint of an article that first appeared in 1932, written by our first Head of School, Lucia Burton Morse; in it, Miss Morse explains much of the thinking behind the original ACS design. We then hear from two of our alumni who have gone on to become architects and learn how ACS has guided and shaped their careers. We check in with a special unit that allows our students to learn more about the school’s architectural roots while also giving them some fun creative and design experience; we then hear from a group of students who recently spent the night without the benefits of a physical structure as they sought to raise awareness for the homeless. Throughout the issue we also share remarkable student artwork depicting scenes around campus and, as always, get updates about some of our alumni.

And rest assured – despite our hypothetical question, there are no plans to ever move The Avery Coonley School! Enjoy reading!


Chris Portman, Editor

Dear Friends,

As a student and an educator, I have studied and worked at many schools across the country, from Mississippi to Manhattan and from downtown Chicago to the California coast. Each stop along the way has been unique in many ways. One of the defining aspects of all of the schools has been its location and, in particular, its physical character and sense of place. Downers Grove is very different from New York City, and the buildings and grounds on the ACS campus reflect and take advantage of those differences in a very special way.

Because our building is set back so far from the road, it's impossible to get a good sense of its size or character simply by driving by. Over the past year, I have enjoyed exploring the various nooks and crannies and passageways around ACS. These idiosyncrasies of course give the building much of its charm, and there is also an inherent joy in discovering a shortcut or noticing some feature for the first time. I'm sure the building must seem like an elaborate maze for some of our youngest students, but by the time graduation rolls around the surroundings are as familiar and comfortable as an old friend.


I have also been struck by the ways in which our school's physical spaces are able to offer a wonderful balance between tranquility and activity. There are many spaces for quiet work and reflection on campus – but the blacktop during recess or the gym during Fall Fest are not among them! And that's the way it should be. It's also a tribute to the genius of the design that many spots are at both ends of the hubbub spectrum, depending on the time of day or the season. I enjoy the solitude and fresh air when walking along the Cloister in the late afternoon, but I also look forward to seeing how that space is transformed for the World's Fair or the Auction.

There is also a great mix of old and new at ACS. Seeing a SMART board or some other piece of new technology right next to a wood-burning fireplace speaks volumes about the kind of place this is. I take very seriously the obligation to safeguard these treasures of the past and to ensure that our students have all of the tools and space needed for 21st century learning. It is one of the things that makes ACS so unique and so special.

Beginning this summer, we will be undertaking a much-needed renovation of certain parts of our original 1929 building. Essential infrastructure elements will be added and there will be some new furnishings and finishes, but the charm and character of the building will remain intact. It is an exciting project, and one that will benefit the students of today and tomorrow. We are very fortunate to be both the beneficiaries and guardians of such a beautiful and effective learning environment.

I understand now why so many people think of ACS as their second home!

Warmly,


Paul Druzinsky, Head of School



*A world of learning and exploration
lies beyond these gates.*



Until the 1993 addition, the south door was the front entrance to the school.

The

SCHOOL BUILDING

*Articulates
with Education*

by *Lucia Burton Morse*

This article originally appeared in Progressive Education, vol. IX (January, 1932)

Lucia Burton Morse was the first Head of The Avery Coonley School. She and Charlotte Krum were the original teachers at Queene Ferry Coonley's first school, founded in Riverside in 1906, and Miss Morse was Mrs. Coonley's closest educational collaborator until her death in 1940.

Only within the last two decades has there been a distinct attempt to bring about in school planning and construction a definite articulation with the newer needs of education. The housing of a school has in the past been arranged by a building committee quite separate from the teachers who were to put it to use – a committee in too many instances mainly interested in producing at the least possible cost a receptacle that would accommodate the greatest number of children in the smallest space. It was considered a point against the principal if there was found in his school any space not filled to capacity at all times. Such a thing as “unassigned space” to meet needs of the moment was looked upon as sheer waste.

This is, unfortunately, still true in much too large a percentage of building under the direction of school boards throughout the country. But a new element which augurs well for the future is entering the situation. There is growing recognition of the fact that education cannot be separated from its set-up or environment.

Traditionally, the high school has ever been one of the most noticeable architectural achievements of a town. However inadequate its arrangement and equipment for the needs of growing youth, the “Old Academy” was a beautiful, or at least an impressive, thing to look upon. But new forces are at work and, rare though they are, they promise to transform school buildings inside as well as out. The new builder of schools is an educational architect, a man who understands the physical, mental, and social needs of children and, in collaboration with the superintendent and the board, provides for these the most perfect building which his architectural abilities and psychological insight can produce. Sometimes this building is not used to its full capacity; sometimes it is misused and overused, but the set-up is there, a challenge to the board and faculty.



Miss Morse (center right with dark hat) collaborated with Mrs. Coonley from 1906 until her death in 1940.

*It would probably not be amiss
to lay the initial impetus
toward buildings adapted to
real education at the door
of the kindergarten.*

It would be difficult to determine what was first responsible for the realization of the part of the building must play in the wholesome, all-round life of the child. The new psychology had its part; better understanding of mental, physical, and social hygiene prompted many changes; the demands of a revised curriculum contributed to the new urge. It would probably not be amiss to lay the initial impetus toward buildings adapted to real education at the door of the kindergarten, which first demanded space and informality. This extended to the primary school. Then the era of specialists began; there must be proper ventilation, lighting, opportunity for physical activity; there must be sanitary cloak rooms, numerous toilets and washrooms, movable desks, a shop, or a library. All this came very gradually.

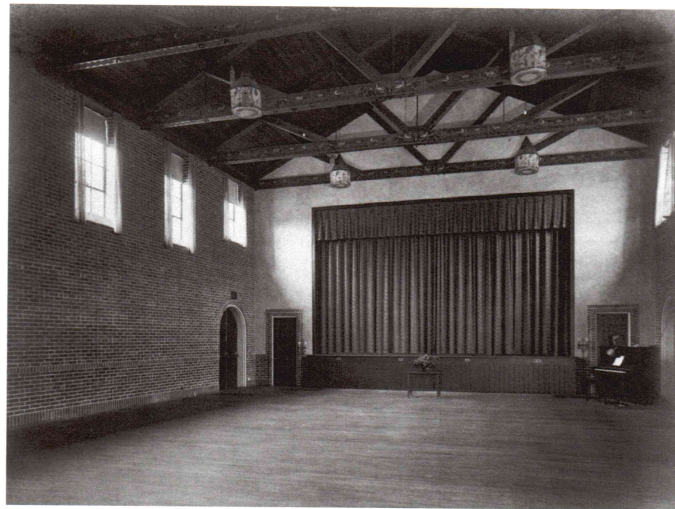
Said one great architect ten years ago, "My whole problem of school building has changed – taken on new life. I shall not be content again to attempt the old stereotyped idea of a place for education; it must be an environment for living."

As yet, the housing problems of the public grade schools have not been very successfully worked out. The pressure of numbers and of limited finances still dominate the situation. It has remained for the privately conducted school to blaze the way, and to demonstrate more or less adequately what may be accomplished under conditions which adhere as far as possible to the principles of progressive education. So little a matter of material, so much a matter of spirit, are these principles, that they often flourish in the poorest physical environment more successfully than in the richest setting where there is not understanding.

It is true, nevertheless, that the very presence of this understanding is bound to transform the environment, and true interpreters of the newer education are never content to remain inactive in surroundings which do not fulfill their vision.

The present Avery Coonley School building, in Downers Grove, Illinois, is the fourth constructed by Mrs. Avery Coonley for the working out of her educational ideas. In close collaboration with her faculty, and with an understanding architect, Mr. Waldron Faulkner of New York, Mrs. Coonley has provided the environment for an elementary school which, in the third year of its functioning, increasingly proves its adequacy, and in its endless possibilities for fuller use is a challenge to staff and students.

The school has a country location on the outskirts of a small town. The partly wooded grounds provide a safe and natural abiding place for the little community of children, yet the school is within walking distance of the homes of most of the pupils. The form of the building is low and ample in its reaches. It is of red brick, the lower part washed with white, and the whole adhering to the broad, horizontal lay of the prairie land. The building follows three sides of a central court, with a columned gallery or loggia, commonly called "the cloister," along its entire length.



*(top) The original art room (now a Fourth Group classroom)
(bottom) In 1993 the hall/gym was divided into two levels, with
administrative offices on the lower level and the library above.*

*Before the building was occupied,
the rooms seemed lacking
in the strong color which
prevails in modern decoration.
The builders, however, were wise
in thinking of it as a background
for the vividness which would come
into being when children,
paints, and ideas came together.*

While it is an entirely connected structure, it is built in several units, which give architectural diversity and interest to the roof lines, and serve the educational purpose of allowing different types of activity to function independently when desirable. At one end of the south side of the court is the kindergarten unit for four- and five-year-olds, consisting of a large central room and two group rooms on one floor, and on the ground floor beneath, a rest room, kitchen, and the kindergarten shop – a layout of activity possibilities which insures opportunity for groups of varying sizes and at the same time undisturbed individual projects. In the center of this side is the administration unit, containing the offices, teachers' and visitors' rooms, current supply room and entrance hall. Over this is the large and beautiful room which contains the library.



The shop was on the lower level of the west wing.

At the corner is the octagonal first-grade room, corresponding to the central room of the kindergarten, with its window alcoves, ample fireplace, and wide spaces.

On the west side of the court are the other group rooms, occupying two floors, with the shop – a light half-basement – below it all.

The north wing houses the assembly hall, music, and art rooms, with an extra room designed for industrial arts. As in the case of other special subjects, however, these activities have found their way into all classrooms, and the industrial arts room has become part of the unassigned space, of which there is much in the school, and which has proved to be in the greatest demand of all.

The walls are uniformly of a light tan plaster, excepting in the assembly hall, where they are of a warm tone of brick, and in the art room where wood paneling extends nearly to the beamed ceiling. The wood is dull-finished natural gum, and before the building was occupied, the rooms seemed lacking in the strong color which prevails in modern decoration. The builders, however, were wise in thinking of it as a background for the vividness which would come into being when children, paints, and ideas came together. Their confidence was not misplaced and now the classroom walls, resplendent with autumn scenes, purple mountains, deep blue night skies, gorgeous maps, or medieval tapestry and illuminations, glow with the best coloring of all – the children's work. In other features also the building is replete with color, lavish as nature is lavish, blending and contrasting with the colors of trees and grass and flowers in its surroundings. The quiet pool in the court reflects a panorama of bright scenes, blue sky, green trees, white arches, and red façade with its variegated insets, and a child, or a butterfly, or a dozen children, flashing through in gay habiliments.

Some special features were carefully thought out and should be included in any description of the building. There is no separate system of ventilation. In all the rooms there are casement windows on two sides, each with an upper section which may be opened without creating a draft directly on the children. Thus the air is constantly changed and kept fresh. Considering that the rooms are large, and groups rarely number over fifteen, the problem of ventilation is fairly met.

Each group has its separate hall and locker room, very light and open, the lockers having no doors, and two windows in each room supplying cross ventilation through them all. There are special outer entrances and exits for all groups to avoid congestion as the children pass in and out.

The central feature of every classroom is its open wood fire, always burning when the weather permits. In addition to numerous upper shelves and cases, each room is supplied with cupboards on the floor level to make easily accessible the working materials used by the children.

The blackboards are equipped with tan burlap curtains, which may be drawn across them when the boards are not in use. These serve as an effective background for pictures, specimens, maps, and what not. Large spaces in each room have been covered with tacking boards of celotex, set in and neatly framed with a gumwood molding.



The Cloister has always been the focal center of campus.

Mention of the large, light basement underneath the whole building must not be omitted. Many of the rooms are really on the ground floor, and have sun and air which make them entirely usable for various activities. Here are the kitchens and luncheon room, and next to them the great room under the Hall for making and storing large scenery. This room is provided with costume closets, where the units of costuming may be hung as they accumulate to be readily accessible for impromptu or repeated performances.

The janitor's quarters are next, with a large repair shop. In the basement, also, are the girls' and boys' showers, ample storage rooms, the great school shop with, at one end, its equipment of tubs and stoves for washing or dyeing – rooms for indoor play, and unassigned spaces used for many purposes. On the whole, the building is simple and adaptable, suited for a child of light and air, of wholesome impulses and attitudes. Its fundamental aims are those universal goals toward which all education is reaching, for it was built to be a place for children to live and grow and learn in, wisely, healthily, cooperatively.

*Its fundamental aims
are those universal goals toward
which all education is reaching,
for it was built to be a place
for children to live and grow
and learn in, wisely,
healthily, cooperatively.*



Kevin Peterson graduated from The Avery Coonley School in 1969. He opened his own architectural practice in 1982, specializing in both residential and commercial design. Kevin remains very connected to the school, serving on both the ACS Alumni Council and the Building Renovation Committee, but his ties go even deeper – his mother, Georgiana, was the ACS music teacher from 1959 through 1962. Kevin and his wife Janet live in Naperville. We recently sat down with him to discuss his time at ACS, his career, and the relationship between the two.

A Portrait of the Architect...

Why did you become an architect?

My father was a mechanical engineer and we had several family friends who were architects, so I was almost predetermined to head in that direction! Plus I have always loved art, and when I was young I would draw or sketch in my free time – that has always been an incredible outlet for me.

What role did your Avery Coonley School experience play in this?

There is absolutely no question that ACS played a huge role in fostering and developing my sense of creativity. And not just artistically, but also in my approach to problem-solving and a willingness to take risks and try new things. Part of it was the curriculum and the role that the arts had in our education, and part of it was the physical surroundings. Many school buildings have no sense of creativity or beauty; they are simply functional boxes. Real architecture is all about how good design influences the way people feel. Being surrounded by so much beauty at ACS, inside and outside – that was tremendously important.

(Above and opposite) The reflection pool and the rock pond highlight the beauty of the campus in different but complementary ways.





Did you spend a lot of school time outdoors?

Oh yes, a great deal – in the courtyard, up by the rock pond, and in the woods surrounding campus. And when I was young, seven or eight years old, my mother arranged to have Sara Virgil, who was the art teacher at ACS at the time, come out to our house, and we would walk in the woods there and draw. You may not notice or pay much attention to the relationship between nature and architecture, but there's definitely a strong connection between them.

What are some of your favorite ACS memories?

I have incredibly warm memories of the original library and the time that we spent there at the Morning Service. John Malach, who was the Head of School, was a larger-than-life figure, figuratively and literally. He was such a gentle, warm person, and having him in front of the room, reading to us, was a wonderful way to start the day. I also remember one Friday Service, when my classmate Mike Reiss and I sang "Blowin' in the Wind" – it was the 1960s after all!

Do you have a favorite spot on campus?

I have always loved the juxtaposition of the rock pond, with its beautiful natural setting, and the structure and design of the courtyard and reflection pool. Both are beautiful but in very different ways, and they work so well together.

It's interesting that you chose two outdoor spots...

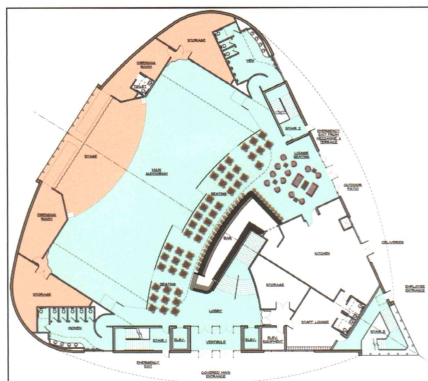
Well, yes. But the courtyard is really an interior space, every bit as much so as, say, the old library. It's just a technicality that it happens to be outside!



(top) A rendering of the Woodstock Theatre and Main Street area.

(middle images) Opening next year, a 2,500 person music venue with a restaurant and bar – the building is shaped like a guitar pick!

(bottom) For decades, the school day began in the library with the morning service (pen and ink drawing by Meredith Staub '07).





In addition to commercial projects, Peterson also specializes in residential design.

Where did you go after you graduated from ACS?

I went to high school at Downers Grove North. I took every art and architecture course that I could, and really enjoyed my time there. But it was a different type of experience than at Avery Coonley, and I chose to accelerate my coursework so that I was able to graduate in three years. After high school I went to the School of Architecture at the University of Illinois-Chicago.

Did your Avery Coonley experience influence your post-ACS education?

Yes, for sure. I found that in architecture school many of the other students struggled to think outside the box. I have always had a strong feeling that anything is possible, and I enjoy looking at things from different perspectives and in new, creative ways. I trace that directly back to my time at Avery Coonley and the freedom we were given to use our imaginations to solve problems and come up with new ideas.

Could you give us an overview of your career?

I have had the opportunity to interact with so many different people in so many different industries. I have designed a wide spectrum of spaces – residential, commercial, hospitality, health care, office buildings. I've also had a long-standing relationship with Willis and Shirley Johnson, the owners of Classic Cinemas. I designed office and commercial spaces for them first, then an apartment building renovation, and after working with them for about two years, we renovated and added on to the Lake Theatre in Oak Park. I've been designing theatres for the Johnsons ever since – fifteen in total now – including the Tivoli in Downers Grove. It has been a great relationship!

With such a wide variety of work, do you have a favorite project?

There are so many different elements to every project, and each is important. I have lots of favorite aspects from various projects – the relationship with the client in this job, the way we enhanced the characteristics of the site in that design – but I do not really have an overall favorite project. Having said that, though, a current exciting project is a 2,500 person "guitar pick-shaped" building that will be a live music venue/restaurant/bar, coming to you in 2016. I'm also proud of the work we did with the Provena Medical Center in Bourbonnais because it had such a positive impact on the way that they are able to provide health care. And it's been very fun working on the Woodstock Theatre. We have expanded the original theatre there – which was the Alpine Theatre in the movie *Groundhog Day* – and have really made it a showpiece on Main Street while maintaining its historical integrity. Plus the movie connection is great – we were planning to do some field work on February 2nd, but were told that we couldn't because the whole town shuts down for Groundhog Day!

Would you say that you have a signature style?

No, I really don't. I do not want people to be able to drive down the street and say, "Oh, that must be a Peterson building." Every project has unique client needs and unique features, plus I firmly believe that the outdoor space must be considered in conjunction with the indoor design, and every site is so different. So it's a challenge – in a good way – to use design skills and problem-solving abilities to meet the needs of each project, and let that set the tone of what the final product looks like. Again, I believe that way of looking at the world is due in large part to my time at Avery Coonley.

When you return to ACS now, what changes are most striking to you?

There have been several building additions of course, and because of that the front entrance has changed – I still think of the south door as the main entrance to school. And there have been a few other changes to the interior spaces and how they are used. But really, the feel of the place has stayed remarkably the same. All of the aspects of ACS that I enjoyed so much as a student, I still love them today!



*The Campuhan Ridge Trail near Ubud
overlooks agricultural rice terraces and
two fast-flowing rivers.*

Building Blocks

A Story of

Bamboo in Bali, Brick in the 'Burbs, and Solid Foundations

by Matt Cook '05

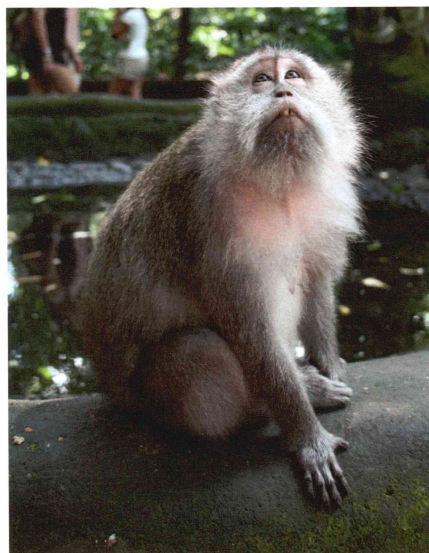


(top) The author's motorcycle helmet set against the fading light over the rice paddies; and (left) his neighbor, Agung, prepares to play Indonesia's national instrument, the gamelan, at a nearby temple.



It is a strange day when Agung does not stop by my house in Banjar Guming, the small agricultural community I call home in Bali, Indonesia. I usually hear him yell my name plaintively from the gate, the hoarseness of his voice mingling with the telltale evening sounds of *tokay* geckoes in the trees and crickets on the lawn. He is always dressed in the customary style of temple-going Balinese men: a knotted head wrap with a frangipani flower tucked behind his ear, a silky white button-down to represent the color of the gods, and an impeccably folded *batik* sarong to complete the look. His smile, somewhere between a Jack-O-Lantern smirk and a tiger's snarl, greets me in slivers through the gaps in my gate. And while I will never let Agung drive my motorbike again, I always appreciate the visit.

I arrived in Indonesia in June as one of the seventeen Americans selected for the 2014-2015 Luce Scholars Program, a fellowship program that places a small group of US citizens in Asia each year working in their field of interest or study for thirteen months. I applied on a whim and lucked into the opportunity of a lifetime. After lengthy conversations with several Luce staff members, it was decided that I would spend my year abroad working for a bamboo architecture firm called Ibuku, based in Bali. Needless to say, my new island home was a far cry from the life I had grown used to as a college student in South Bend, Indiana, and my sudden move to Asia required some adjustment.



(top) The Taman Ayun, one of Bali's most magnificent temple complexes. The black ijuk roofs are made from fibers found in coconut palms.

(bottom) One of the famed denizens of Ubud's Sacred Monkey Forest stands guard at the entrance.

Before they knew what to call me, everyone on my block referred to me as "Mas Bule" – "Mister White Guy." While they have warmed to me over the past several months and have finally learned my name (though one of my neighbors has two sons who still occasionally steal out of their bath, naked as day, when their mother is not looking and run to my yard to frantically yell my sobriquet at the house before she collects them apologetically), they still keep their distance most of the time. To them, I am an alien, in some ways even an intruder and a disturber of the status quo in their tiny village. But to Agung, I was just another friendly face on our tiny gravel road; he was the first person to make me feel like I actually belonged in the *banjar*. Agung was there at my gate on day one with a house-warming offer that I, the Indonesia uninitiated, could not refuse: he would drive my motorbike while I rode as a passenger, and together we would go see the remarkable sights in our own neighborhood, miles off the well-worn tourist trail. I agreed, and we were off at a speed that my mother certainly would not have approved of.

A few hours later, after visiting moss-covered temples crowded with monkeys, rope bridges over roaring rivers in the jungle, and craggy moonscapes in our own backyard, Agung invited me back to his family compound to celebrate his birthday. He asked that I join him in the family's *bale*, a sort of open-air pavilion containing a shrine that is usually reserved for special functions. Agung's family members, who all live on the same property, looked on as I ascended the platform where a glass of *jamu* (a foul but supposedly healing concoction made of turmeric and chilis in water) awaited me. Agung took the cup and drank from it, then lifted it to me and indicated that I should share in drinking this heinous beverage as an act of brotherhood. There was a moment of hesitation on my part as

I gazed into the cup, wondering how long its contents had been culturing some kind of gastrointestinal parasite in the hot sun beating down on Agung's porch. With cholera and the potential for cultural faux pas both hanging in the balance, I decided that the latter would likely have more deleterious effects on the remaining 99% of my time in Bali, so I pinched my nose and chugged. While the *jamu* was offensive to the senses in every way, the chance to join in this ceremony as a foreigner was an occasion I will not soon forget. With this Indonesian version of the breaking of the bread out of the way, Agung's family proceeded to belt out a rousing round of "Happy Birthday" in Indonesian under the shade of the *bale*.

I was told that the party would start at 3 PM, but an hour later, I was still the sole non-family guest in attendance. Finding this a bit odd, I took my question to Agung's nephew Ajik when the birthday boy was momentarily absent from the room.

"Agung is a manic depressive and has very bad mood swings. He has to take very strong medicine that makes him dangerous to those around him. Everyone in the *banjar* knows this, so they will not come today. I am surprised you got on a motorbike with him!" Ajik finished with a laugh.

Oh. Noted.

Despite Agung's urging, we have not made another tour of the area since my arrival in Banjar Guming, but he continues to appear at my gate most days to inquire about the potential for further exploration of the region. While the greatest takeaway from Agung's birthday festivities was a lasting feeling of belonging in the neighborhood, I was, as an architect, also struck deeply by the places we visited on my first tour of Bali. That a type of building exists exclusively for the ritual drinking of turmeric juice was surprising enough, but we also saw astonishing brick and stone temples beyond comprehension, pavilions with black roofs made from the fibers of coconut palms, and impressive

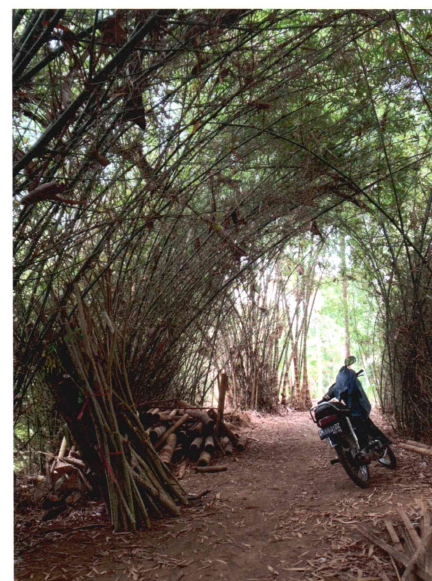


halls held aloft only by a delicate lacework of bamboo beams. It was immediately clear that in Bali, tradition is still very much alive, and the buildings that provide the setting for these important social functions will continue to be an integral part of the built environment here for the foreseeable future.

The uniqueness of Balinese architecture might make Agung's *jamu* pavilion and its ilk seem like isolated instances of highly specialized island architecture, but careful reflection reveals that we too share in a tradition of buildings uniquely suited to their functions. As I sipped turmeric sludge on Agung's porch, I was reminded of quirky spaces in the West that I have known and loved: sugar shacks in Québec on our Eighth Group field trip, where fourteen-year olds already prone to wiggly, awkward dancing were summoned into motion by the *clack-clack* of wooden spoons against a knee; the Third Group learning spaces, architecture in miniature, perfectly sized for getting lost in a book; even temporary structures like the ACS

auction tent, which always signals the frenetic end of the school year and the countdown to summer. These are our *bale*; these are our *jamu* pavilions. Tradition is alive and well in our lives too, and the unique spaces we inhabit enhance these traditions and carry them into the future.

Architecture acts as a vessel for culture, and the incredible variety of building types and styles around the world provides the backdrop for beautiful travel and exploration beyond the comfort of home. But it is also true that well-designed space has a way of transporting us to the places we love most, even when we are far from them. Over the holidays, I had the opportunity to visit Japan for the first time, and while my surroundings were new to me, they also felt oddly familiar. It dawned on me that much of the architecture of Kyoto reminded me of a place very close to my heart: The Avery Coonley School.



(top left) Workers from the eastern Indonesian island of Sumba learn to build in bamboo while constructing this farm dormitory, which Cook helped to design.

(above top) What a bunch of Lucers! The author (second from left) and his colleagues from the Luce Scholars Program celebrate in traditional temple garb at an odalan ceremony for the town of Ubud in Bali.

(above) A workman's motorcycle is tucked into this bamboo thicket, along with material for the construction of a new dormitory at Green School's farm.



Two geishas ascend the stairs to Kiyomizu-dera in Gion, Kyoto. Many of the architectural lessons of Kyoto were cribbed by Frank Lloyd Wright in the development of his Prairie School aesthetic.

Our own hometown hero, Frank Lloyd Wright, is famous for a body of design work that relied heavily on architectural lessons learned abroad in Japan. Wright was, in fact, so taken with the elegant simplicity of Japanese prints that he amassed one of the most notable collections in the United States, and at least for a time, he was making more money buying and selling prints than he was as an architect. Waldron Faulkner, an admirer of Wright and an inheritor of many of the legendary architect's design concepts, incorporated many of FLW's Japanese-inspired techniques, like carried parallel lines and accentuated horizontality, into the design of one of his own crowning achievements: the plans for a school at 1400 Maple Avenue. The result of course is a building we all know, and one that embodies many of the principles of Wright's Prairie School (albeit in a quite eclectic way). But our own much beloved school also tells a story of a place far away, of lessons Wright learned in the Land of the Rising Sun, of a design mind sculpted on the other side of the world. It is no wonder then that, hunched over a wintry bowl of ramen in Kyoto, I felt immediately transported back to the Second Group classroom at ACS, reliving a memory of eating hot chicken soup from a thermos in my lunchbox as Mrs. Riggle and Mrs. Fick played an ancient recording of the radio broadcast of the "Cinnamon Bear" just before our holiday break. Something about the colors of the ramen shop – dark blues, white plaster, exposed brick and timber – and the coziness of the space called me back to a snowy day at Avery Coonley. Being carried through time and space in that way was a testament to architecture's ability to tie us to memory and to blur the lines between cultures.

I also have the opportunity to draw a more direct comparison between my surroundings in Bali and ACS on an almost daily basis. My company, Ibuku, is a bamboo design/build firm that was born largely out of one man's desire to construct a school in the tropics that would connect students to their natural surroundings and their studies. John Hardy, my boss's father, operated one of the world's largest and most successful jewelry businesses from Bali for several decades – that is, until 2006, when he participated in a site visit and discovered that the gold and silver mining his company was undertaking was poisoning ground water supplies in many rural areas, forcing whole villages to move out. He immediately sold his stake in the company and then, as an ecological act of contrition, Green School was born: a K-12 school designed with sustainability in mind and with the idea that here in Bali, John could educate the next generation of "green" leaders to offset the damage his company had wrought on the environment. He dreamed of a school that blended into the jungles of Bali, one built of a natural material that could be returned to the earth at any time. After careful thought and collaboration with engineers, ecologists, and educators, John chose to build in bamboo.

On the surface, the architecture of Green School could not be more different from the buildings and grounds at ACS. Classrooms are open to the elements, and a menagerie of creatures (Jurassic Park-sized insects, geckoes, chickens, and one rather obstinate cow) come and go as they please. Buildings take on fantastical shapes: some like leaves floating on the wind, a few like turtles hiding in their shells, and others like alien spacecraft landing on the banks of the River Ayung. The biggest difference of course is the bamboo: nearly everything on the Green School campus is made of this wundergrass, down to the pegs that hold each structure together. These differences, though, are mostly cosmetic, and the students' connection to their surroundings and to their studies reminds me in a most uncanny way of



Avery Coonley. The interactions I witness when I am on campus immediately bring me back to ACS. Heart of School, the main building at Green School, is always alive with students learning from each other, singing Balinese folk songs, and even swapping snacks from each other's lunch boxes, just like in Avery Coonley's Mochel Commons (though in Bali, they are usually trading *beef rendang* or *ayam betutu* instead of PB&J). The Green School's answer to the PAC, the Mepantigan, brings the whole student body together in an outdoor theater surrounding a mud pit. And just as our Second Group students tap the maple trees, the children at Green School learn to harvest coconuts from the tropical palms right outside their classrooms. Green School students crave learning in the same way that ACS students do, and in both places, environment and built surroundings are major components of the learning process.

Now almost ten years after my graduation from Avery Coonley, the impact that my surroundings at ACS had on my trajectory as an engaged learner and as a citizen of the world is evident to me. Of course, the learning environment created by faculty, staff, and teachers was a nurturing one that fostered curiosity and provided the opportunity to go out on an intellectual limb without the fear of falling too

far. On top of that, the physical space of Avery Coonley provokes thought and ties students to tradition. The architecture of ACS is an integral part of the formative education our school provides, and I know that without the experience of learning in such a beautiful and storied environment, I would not be where I am today, studying architecture on the other side of the world.

There are times during the course of my year in Asia when I feel that I could not possibly be farther, in time and space, from my ACS days, and indeed that is nearly true – if I were to dig a hole from Bali straight through the center of the Earth, I might very well emerge in the middle of the Cloister. But then, I just have a bowl of ramen or see the smiles on the faces of Green School students, and it reminds me that Avery Coonley is not so far away after all. There are glimpses of the traditions, places, and people I care for most scattered all over the planet, and so often, they are embedded in or connected to a place's architecture. It is a continual reminder that the world is very small; that, for the most part, people everywhere cherish similar things; and most importantly, no matter where you find yourself, you're never too far from home.

(top left) Heart of School, the center of campus at Green School in Bali, is where students gather and learn together.

(above) There are over 1,500 species of bamboo on the planet. These incredibly renewable super-grasses can grow up to a yard a day and can reach heights of sixty feet or more.

A Cornerstone

Architecture *and* Education

In addition to being a leader of the Progressive Education movement, our founder Queene Ferry Coonley was extremely interested in the functional and esthetic roles of architecture. In 1907, she chose Frank Lloyd Wright to design her family's house in Riverside, and a few years later again turned to Wright to design a school building – the famous Coonley Playhouse – on their property; she and Wright remained friends throughout their lives. Mrs. Coonley's son-in-law, Waldron Faulkner, was also a highly regarded architect, and in 1928 she chose him to design The Avery Coonley School as one of his first major projects. The three buildings most closely associated with Mrs. Coonley – her Riverside home, the 18th century house that she purchased when she moved to Washington, DC, and The Avery Coonley School – are all on the National Register of Historic Places.



Students work on various sections of the display board for their educational theme park.



Each team is responsible for a particular section of the display board, but each section must connect to adjoining spaces in logical ways.

With these strong connections between architecture and education as part of our historical make-up, it is no surprise that the buildings and grounds have always played such a central role in the ACS experience.

For decades, our students have also studied the theoretical and practical aspects of architecture. In 1933, George Steckmesser, an architect who had studied under Frank Lloyd Wright, began teaching science at ACS, and the fundamentals of building design and construction became a regular part of our curriculum. Students throughout the years have used their creative and mathematical abilities to plan and build a wide variety of structures. In recent years, they have also had the opportunity to tour the Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio in Oak Park and the Coonley home and Playhouse in Riverside.

Today, Fourth Group teachers Jan Ciampi and Jennifer Marvel-Gillono lead a major architecture unit each spring. This multi-faceted project begins with a study of *A Simple Wish: The First Century of the Avery Coonley School*. Small groups of students read a particular section of the book and then give a PowerPoint presentation to the class; taken together, the students see the entire ACS history, including the key role played by architecture in our heritage. They also learn about basic architectural terms and concepts as well as various elements of home construction, and then tour the Wright Studio and Coonley buildings.

The unit culminates with a month-long group endeavor called "The Architects of Learning." This assignment, which comes immediately after their study of the Westward Movement, involves the research, design, and construction of a scale model Wild West educational theme park.

The students work in teams of four to construct the theme park, which is akin to a miniature Epcot Center in its scope and purpose. Each team begins by selecting and researching a particular aspect of the Western Movement – such as the California Gold Rush, pioneer life, or the transcontinental railroad – for their theme, and then plans interactive exhibits and displays to convey the various aspects of that theme. The eight teams are each given a section of the large display board – the park's grounds – and within their area they must not only construct a scale-model pavilion, but also adequate parking, landscaping, and sidewalks, all of which must connect to adjoining sections in a logical way. Each student on a team is responsible for a key element of the design and together they create a scaled blueprint of their concept. Their pavilion must include not only adequate space for their museum displays, but also bathrooms, storage and coat check areas, and one unique element such as a gift shop or snack bar. Moreover, the building must have at least one angled wall and also be ADA compliant.

After the research and design, construction begins. Students are given strips of paper to represent the exterior walls of their structure. They then must shape them, put in windows and doors, and make sure that the building fits within its footprint; the interior and exterior spaces together also must be contained within the team's section of the display board.

Once everything is completed, each team explains its concept and design to a panel of experts, as well as to the rest of the class via a closed-circuit video feed. The panel – which typically consists of ACS administrators and teachers serving as industry specialists – decides whether or not the project is worthy of funding for construction. To make the determination, they look at the scaled drawings and construction and check the related mathematical calculations, evaluate the esthetics and functionality of the overall design, and judge the quality of the presentation.

In addition to giving the students valuable hands-on experience with architectural planning and construction, this unit involves many other skills and offers a multitude of benefits. The students conduct both traditional and online research, and have the opportunity to use websites that provide both useful background information and virtual construction programs. They must thoroughly understand the historical components of their particular theme in order to brainstorm possible educational displays, and their scaled drawings and models involve considerable mathematical calculations and scientific considerations. The final product involves dexterous building skills as well as creativity and artistic ability. And their presentation to the panel provides an intense but safe opportunity to hone their public speaking skills.

It is a challenging, complicated project. For that very reason, perhaps the greatest benefit to our students is the real-world understanding of the value of teamwork in multistep problem-solving. And the fact that this all takes place within the context of our shared heritage, and provides a unique understanding of ACS history, helps to establish connections not only among classmates but also across generations.



An iconic view of the Coonley house in Riverside, one of Frank Lloyd Wright's largest private residences; Jens Jensen designed the grounds.

(This page and opposite): The students faced the elements with very basic supplies – sleeping bags and cardboard boxes.





Sleepless *in* Downers Grove

Raising Awareness for the Homeless

In an issue in which we examine the function, impact, and power of architecture, it seems appropriate also to consider what it is like to live with its absence. For one night last November, several members of the ACS community had a chance to experience first-hand the challenges of being homeless.

For the past several years, Bridge Communities has sponsored “Sleep Out Saturday” on the first Saturday of November. Participants spend the night outside in the elements, with limited gear, both as a way to raise money to combat homelessness and to raise awareness of the problem. Brothers Yaseen and Ibrahim Ahmed (ACS Classes of 2015 and 2017) spearheaded the effort to bring the cause to ACS, and they were joined by fellow Middle School students Avery Carlson, Henry Davis, Will Fry, Erin Gillen, Maya Goyal, Shaad Khalil, Gyury Lee, Owen Louis, Joshua Orr, Zahrah Qureshi, and Tim Zangler. In addition, Head of School

Paul Druzinsky, Assistant to the Head Barbara Cosentino, Literacy Teacher Michelle Schaub and her son Ben, and parents Faryal Ahmed and Patrick Fry joined the group. After a light dinner and a movie about a homeless man and his son, they headed out to the Cloister with their sleeping bags and cardboard boxes. It was a chilly night – the low was 28 degrees – and an invigorating experience. The ACS students recently gathered to discuss what they learned.

*Let’s talk about the movie – *The Pursuit of Happyness* – what were some of the things that really stood out for you?*

Zahrah: The main character was a perfectly normal guy; he was a kind person inside. But he became homeless after a series of bad things happened to him. It really went against the stereotype that the homeless are all dirty and that they’re not smart.

Avery: He was trying to hide his homelessness and just trying to fit in. He didn’t want anyone else to know how little money he had. He was constantly moving, trying to function and figure out what to do next. It was hard.

Owen: I liked the scene in the movie where the main character is in a fight over \$14. When we go to the movies, our parents probably hand us \$20 for the ticket and popcorn or whatever. And that guy was fighting over those few dollars because in his entire bank account he had, I think, \$23. That’s not a lot of money – that’s one movie.

What were your thoughts before you went out the doors to the Cloister? Were you nervous about sleeping outside?

Tim: I was kind of nervous and a little bit excited – I knew it would be freezing.

Zahrah: I was nervous!

Maya: I was more excited than nervous. I was anxious to see if I would be able to spend the whole night outside.

Shaad: Before that day I had an on and off fever, so I was a little worried about getting more sick. But I’m really glad I was able to have this experience.

Ibrahim: I was excited! I had a friend tell me about Sleep Out Saturday a while ago, and I have wanted to do it ever since then. I like helping out and this is a good way to do that.



(top) The students gathered in the Commons before heading out to spend the night in the Cloister.
(bottom) In the morning, frost covered the ground – and their sleeping bags!

Henry: I thought it was going to be really, really cold, so I was nervous.

Joshua: Everyone in my family kept telling me how cold it was going to be!

Was it harder or easier than you expected?

Zahrah: Fortunately for us it wasn't raining or snowing or anything like that. But if you think about it, there are people who actually have to survive in the snow and rain and all the elements.

Yaseen: It was pretty cold, but I'm grateful that it wasn't too bad!

Henry: Yes, once I actually got there and got settled in I realized that it wasn't that cold. I saw how important the boxes are. I looked at the box that I had and it had frost on it, but it was nice and warm inside.

Owen: And sleeping in the Cloister, that gave us the opportunity to get out of the wind – the homeless don't really have that kind of choice.

Maya: It was a little harder than I expected. I shivered a little bit during the night, and when I woke up I saw that there was frost on my sleeping bag!

Erin: It was a lot harder than I thought it would be. I knew it would be cold, that I would freeze. But at the same time, it was harder in the sense that you really had to humble yourself.

Did you sleep?

Maya: Yes, I slept for most of the time.

Tim: I thought I would sleep through the night, but I never did – I continuously woke up.

Avery: What had me staying up was thinking about what the homeless have to do. I was awake a lot thinking those thoughts, wondering what homeless people might have on their "to do" list first thing in the morning and all the things that they would try to do to survive in the elements.

Erin: Almost every one of us was really exhausted after the experience, regardless of whether they had slept or not, because it's really hard to function like that.

What was it like being out in the elements all night?

Yaseen: It was a really eye-opening experience, to be out there in the cold, experiencing what those who are far less fortunate have to face every day.

Ibrahim: We all had sleeping bags, but sometimes they don't even have that, just a cold bench. And knowing that you have to do that 365 days a year, that must be really tough.

Erin: I agree. All the time that I was sleeping out there, when I would wake up because I was cold, I realized how hard it must be to do that on a daily basis.

Will: I think it's incredibly hard just to fathom what it would be like to face the elements day after day. Last year it was so cold – to face that for 8 hours or more every night without a sleeping bag or the right clothes – it's just crazy.

Besides the cold, what are some of the other challenges that the homeless face?

Zahrah: What was nice for us, after this we just got to go home! But other people do it every day– they don't have a place to call home. And it's even harder when you're a single parent, trying to figure things out without any support.

Gyury: Not only do they sleep outside, but they have to get food and water in order to survive – they have to do whatever they can. And because of that they have to swallow their pride and be willing to do anything in order to stay alive.

Owen: There's also the money factor. Money isn't happiness, but it provides opportunities for happiness, and homeless people don't have those opportunities.

Tim: To be homeless, it would be so much worse on so many different levels. We're so privileged; it's hard to even imagine how hard it is for the homeless.

What would it be like to be a homeless child or teenager?

Gyury: It's a lot more than just trying to survive in the cold. It would be harder to stay healthy – you wouldn't have someone watching over you, fixing you a healthy meal every day. You would just have to try to pick up something here or there to eat. There are so many other factors that come into play when you are homeless.

Will: If you were homeless it would be really hard to keep up with your homework. Just something like getting a poster board for a project would be tough.

Ibrahim: Even getting to school would be harder. If you relied on a bus or some other public transportation, it would be challenging to be on time. And you might have to switch schools if you go to a new area, and that's really hard.

Shaad: I read an article recently about a girl who lived under the football stands at her high school for three years. I think it's sad that people in this country live like that.

Zahrah: Yes, and when you become homeless, you don't want to admit it – you are afraid that people will make fun of you.

Maya: You wouldn't be able to do a lot of things that we take for granted, like sleepovers.

Owen: So it would be hard to have any friends because they might think differently of you, and you would keep to yourself. Without friends and without any happiness, it's harder to function – you can't get your work done, you can't succeed.

Did this experience change the way you think about the homeless?

Yaseen: These people who are homeless are just like us, they have feelings just like us. Imagine being in their shoes. Imagine living like that every single night. You would give anything to be in a better position. Putting yourself in their shoes is really important and this was a great way to do that.

Tim: I am honestly surprised how little attention is given to homeless people. I will never look at the homeless the same way.

Erin: Doing this definitely helped me to realize the challenges that the homeless face every day.

Maya: I used to see homeless people in Chicago and not think much about them. But now I want to try to help, to give them some food or money.

Ibrahim: If a homeless person asks you for a little bit of money and you don't give it to them, I understand how it would definitely hurt. They would probably think, Oh, this person probably has a dollar or two to spare but they didn't give it to me. Now I would probably also be offended by that, so it did change my point of view.

Will: Some people think that the homeless are all outcasts and mean, but many times they are really kind people.

Ibrahim: Yes, there is a stereotype that they are dirty, filthy, mean people. But they are definitely humbled by the elements and what they endure.

Gyury: It's almost like homeless people want permission to be happy. They're at the lower level of the social ladder and they really just want to find a way to keep living. After this experience, I realize that homelessness is a major problem. I just wish a lot more people could be aware of it so we could try to build a better future for them.

How else did this experience affect you?

Avery: I thought after sleeping out there that it seemed really hard, and if it were really bad weather then it would be even worse. Once you have an experience like this, you go home and think about what you're grateful for and what you have. And I think about what it would be like to be homeless, doing that every day, trying to pick myself up and dust myself off, and get back to having a home and all the things that I need to live.

Erin: It really impacts you to participate in this activity, knowing that other people are doing this every single night, night after night in the cold. You start thinking about all that you're grateful for.

Ibrahim: After this experience, I hope that I never take what I have for granted again. It's human nature, so probably we all will. But we really shouldn't forget that we're just so incredibly lucky to have all that we do, while some people have so little.

Shaad: We're sitting here talking and eating pizza, and we're all happy. This is such a privileged life. Many people are less fortunate than we are – we really need to try to focus on that and see all that we have rather than what we don't have. The homeless have to endure the elements, no matter what; it just really makes you think about how fortunate we really are. We're always asking for new things – shoes, clothes, gadgets.

Homeless people ask for more serious matters – they ask for food, they ask for water, they ask for shelter. We think we're so different but we're really not. We all need what we need, and we have to remember that not everyone has all those things.

Having gone through this, what do you think can or should be done about homelessness?

Owen: Donating \$1 or \$10 to that guy on the street is nice, but it really isn't going to help solve the problem of homelessness. We need to think on a bigger scale, and once that chain starts, then real change will happen.

Tim: I agree that just giving one dollar isn't going to do much. We actually have to act on it and do something more.

Henry: One thing would be to get involved and start an organization where we could gather things to keep people warm, and then hand them out at homeless shelters.

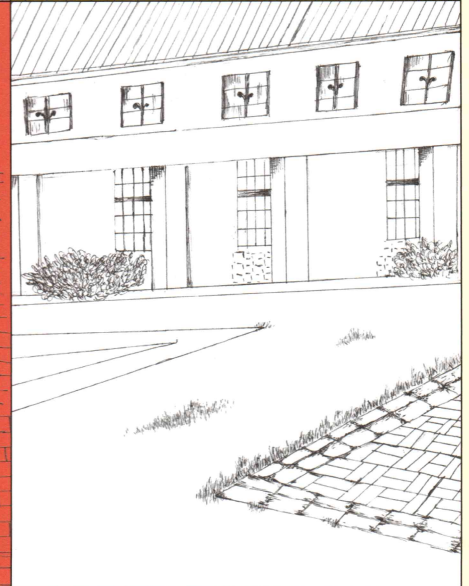
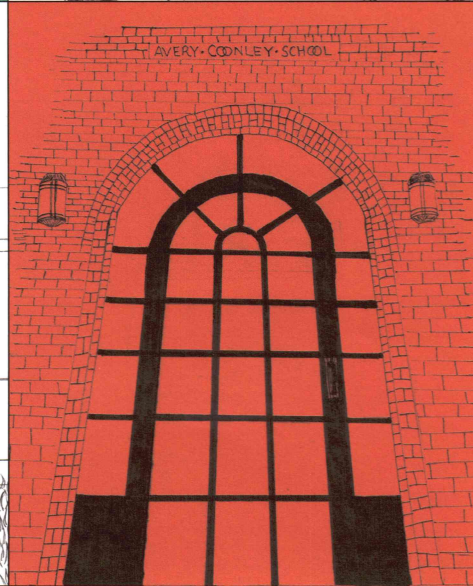
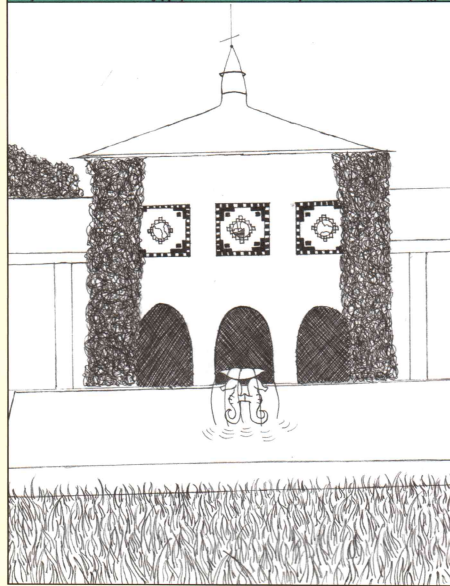
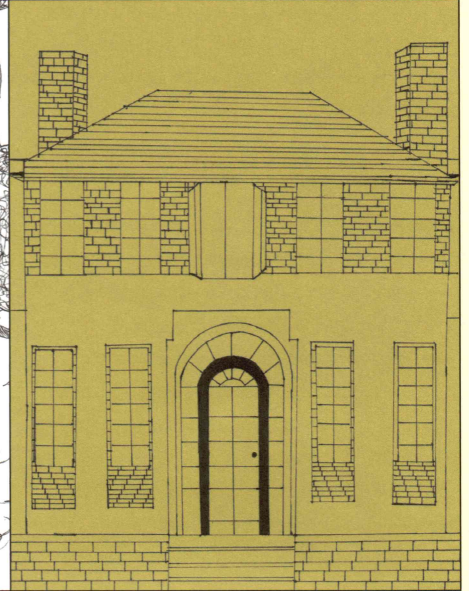
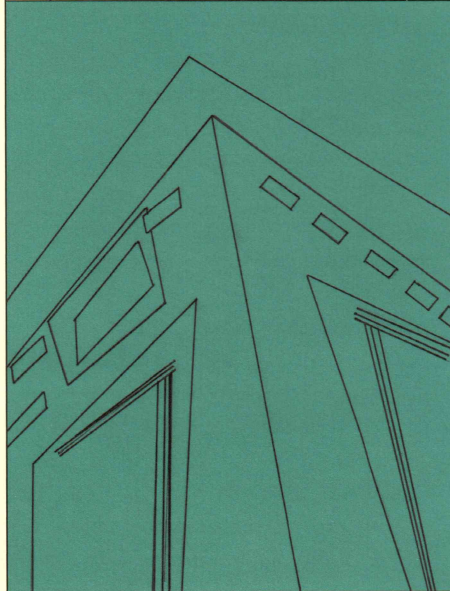
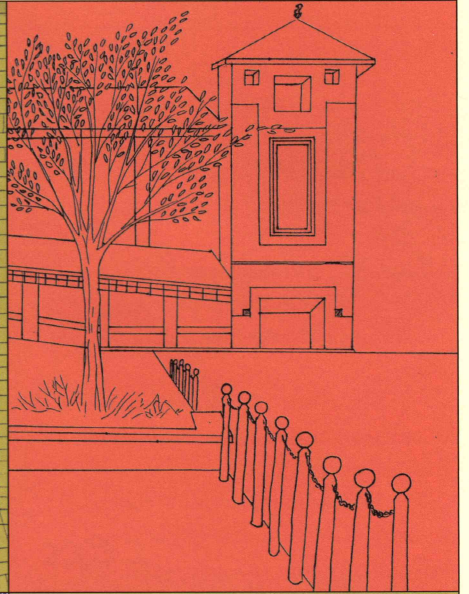
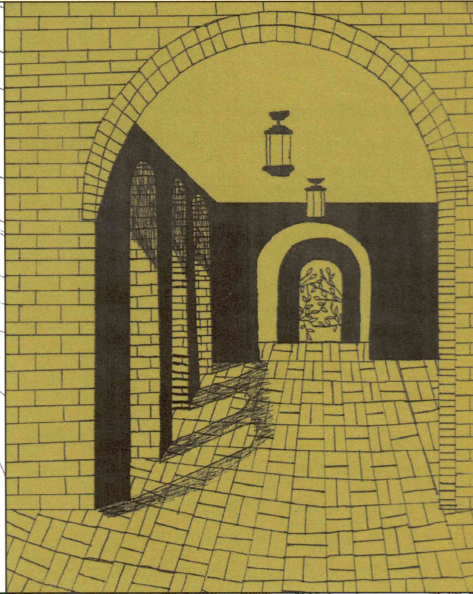
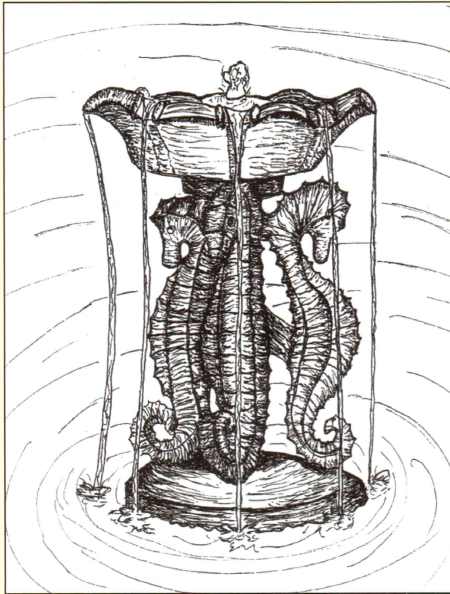
Gyury: When I talked to other people about this, I realized that many people just wave off the problem like it's a small fly; they just don't care. But I think we should be different. We should be more considerate and try to help the people around us to make a better society.

Joshua: From my experience being out there in the cold, I could tell that doing it night after night after night would be very hard, so when you see someone who is homeless, and they're all dirty and maybe angry, you should recognize what they are facing - it's not their fault.

Yaseen: I agree. Everyone should know that they didn't ask to be put in this position. A lot of people look down on the homeless people. Experiencing what they experience and understanding their situation are such big factors in improving our perception of who they are and what they face.

Would you do this again?

A unanimous "Yes!"





Beauty

in the
Details

As our students pass through our Art program from Lower through Middle School, they have the opportunity to seamlessly build on skills learned in prior years. In drawing, this culminates with the pen and ink technique that students learn in Eighth Group. There is an amazing growth and progression evident in these works, developed from simple line drawings in the early years and building in sophistication over time.

Seventh Group students learn contour drawing, which is the precursor to the pen and ink technique. In contour drawing, the focus is on the outlined shape of the object rather than on specific features. Having learned ways to see and convey the mass and volume of the subject, the students are then ready in Eighth Group to add the details. The focus now is on the precise lines and textures that give a particular object its unique look and feel.

The Eighth Groupers first create a pen and ink drawing for the Thanksgiving Program. They choose several photographs of autumnal, Thanksgiving, or Native American scenes, and then work with art teacher Sandra Bohn to select one with an appropriate level of detail. Using that photo as their template, they then practice the technique in a sketchbook before beginning to draw on their display board. The initial marks on their board are done in pencil, and are then covered with ultra-fine point marker to simulate the look of a traditional fountain pen.

After this Thanksgiving project, the students are then asked to photograph a spot on the ACS campus – if possible, from an angle or perspective that they had not really noticed before – and then create a drawing based on that photo. Many choose to use this same pen and ink technique, which works particularly well with many of the heavily detailed areas of our buildings and grounds. These drawings are then used for the yearbook covers and graduation program and, in keeping with our “architecture” theme, throughout this issue of the *ACS Magazine*.

The pen and ink drawings were done by (top row, left to right) Marlena Abraham '07, Julia Rippe '07, Greg Leya '04; (middle row) Sarah Polowczak, Rose Benas, Katie Rowan; (bottom row) Ellyse Grunsten, Quetzali Lopez, and Sarah Kim (the artists in the middle and bottom rows are all in the Class of 2015).

Around Campus

Voici Nos Amis Français!

In October, twenty students and two teachers from Collège Privé Joseph Niel in Muret, France visited ACS. They stayed with Seventh and Eighth Group families, who graciously showed them the sights around Chicago. The French students also spent time at ACS, attending many classes and taking part in various activities, including Fall Fest. The visit was part of an ongoing relationship between ACS and the French school; last June, several of our Eighth Group students visited France and were hosted by the same school families in Muret.

Favorite Memories

This theme of this year's ACS Auction is "A Simple Wish - Continuing the Legacy." The evening will be a celebration of the past, present, and future of The Avery Coonley School. It will be a wonderful opportunity to reflect on Mrs. Coonley's educational vision, her philanthropic spirit, and the remarkable heritage that she has left to us.

As part of the festivities, we are gathering personal stories from all members of the ACS community across the generations. Whether you are an alum of the school, a parent of alumni, a former teacher, or someone connected to ACS in another way, we invite you to share your fondest ACS memories or your most valued and influential experiences. These stories will help to bring the spirit of the school to life at the Auction!

You can mail your memories to the school in the postage-paid envelope included with this magazine, or visit our webpage at www.averycoonley.org/?page=ACSmemories. Thank you for your participation!



The French students and their ACS hosts gathered in the Cloister.



Henry Wright (left) and Jaysic Gandurski at their favorite spot along the circuit.

Walk This Way – The Mile Club

Fourth Group students Jaysic Gandurski and Henry Wright have a goal – to get to 500 miles before the end of the school year.

The two have been running (or, when the weather does not cooperate, walking) around the perimeter of the playground field since they were in First Group. Five laps equals one mile, and five miles earns a student a brightly colored plastic foot called a "toe token." It's part of a program designed to promote walking and running at schools across the country; PE teacher Adam Metcalf heard about the program and brought it to ACS several years ago.

Other students also participate, but Jaysic and Henry have been our most enthusiastic and dedicated participants, rarely missing a day. They always wait for each other and together have worked out a wide variety of patterns and activities for the route. The two boys have been friends since Kindergarten, but both agree that the Mile Club has definitely strengthened their friendship. Jaysic and Henry recently passed 400 total miles – 500 is well within reach!

We love to hear what our alumni are doing! Email information to cportman@averycoonley.org or share a note in the enclosed postage-paid envelope. We look forward to hearing from you...thanks!

1944

Lita Sullivan Pierce passed away on January 9, 2015. Lita had a long career in theater, music, and dance, and several years ago she composed a song in honor of ACS.

1990

Gabby Green (pictured below) recently visited ACS and spoke with the Seventh Group students about her career as an attorney. Gabby, who works as an assistant public defender, provided the students with many different hypotheticals so that they could gain a better understanding of the complexities and nuances of the legal profession. Her presentation was part of a unit in which students research a particular career; alumni can volunteer as industry experts and mentors and may be interviewed by students as part of their research.



1993

We were very sad to hear of the recent passing of **Jon Shotola**. After ACS, Jon went on to Hinsdale High School, Deep Springs College, and Brown University, and also became a private pilot and flight instructor. He is remembered as a very talented and hard-working student, and was known for his kindness, quick wit, and beautiful smile. Jon died on January 22, 2015.

1998

Rick Baum is enjoying a new career as an academic tutor and extracurricular enrichment specialist (<http://about.me/rjbaum>). He continues to write music and appreciates collaborating with inspired professionals. His first child, Autumn Penelope Baum, shares a unique style of playful confidence and serious inquiry that he hopes to emulate.

Jim Virtel and his wife Raquel were recently back in Chicago and stopped by ACS for a visit. They live in Massachusetts where Jim works in marketing for a craft brewery.



Making Queene Ferry proud, Rick Baum and Tricia Robertson-Lopez are raising Autumn Penelope "onward and upward."

2005

Ibrahim Bengali is a consultant for Oliver Wyman out of Chicago. He spends his free time working for the Ta'leef Collective, an organization focusing on community care and assisting in deepening individuals' Islamic understanding.

Amanda Fry is in her first year at the USC Gould School of Law and will be externing for a judge in the Central District of California this summer.

Shelly Janevicius is in her second year of law school at DePaul University College of Law, specializing in Art Law. She is also getting her MBA in International Business at DePaul.

Austen Mack-Crane lives in Washington, DC, and tinkers with bicycles when he's not assisting with computational social science research.

Jessica McKee is living in Perth, Australia where she plans on starting a Masters in Dietetics this winter/June. Jessica foresees herself staying in Australia and hopes to one day move to an area with a higher kangaroo population and possibly a Starbucks.

Class Notes



Jim O'Leary and Krystle Leung from the Class of 2007 were among the ACS graduates who returned for the annual Young Alumni Party in January.

Dorothy McQuaid is currently doing an environmental internship in New York with the Student Conservation Association.

Liz Melton is a Business and Systems Integration Analyst for Accenture based out of Los Angeles. However, she still experiences the Midwest cold traveling to her current major retailer project in chilly Minneapolis each week. She is hoping to be staffed on a healthcare and/or pharma project next to put her MS to good use!

John O'Leary is pursuing an academic career in East Asian studies. He is currently studying in the Masters program at the University of Colorado and teaching undergraduates.

Sarah Perez-Sanz is the Garden Manager at the Youth Garden Project in beautiful Moab, UT.

Burke Sims recently completed his M.Sc. in International History at the London School of Economics. He now lives in New York City where he works in Capital Markets at Citigroup.

Bryan Vanco is pursuing his Ph.D in Communication at UConn, where he serves as a department researcher and instructor of public speaking.



Middle School Head Anna Lenhardt and Director of Development Joan Sunseri recently hosted an alumni gathering in Boston. Pictured from left: Joan Sunseri, Bill Fick '84, Peter Angerhofer '83, Catherine Larrabee '08, Stephen Ilhardt '08, Ravi Jagadeesan '10, Krishna Gupta '01, Anna Lenhardt, Greg Leya '04, Charlie Crespi '71, and Alexandra Thompson-Cole '87 (Jim Virtel '98 not pictured).

2007

James O'Leary represented Yosemite National Park at a UNESCO conference in Huangshan, China in June 2014 and presented a lecture about the sister park relationship to 130 delegates. Jim studies at Georgetown University School of Foreign Service.

2010

Ravi Jagadeesan was recently named a 2014 Davidson Fellow Laureate by the Davidson Institute for Talent Development. He earned a \$50,000 scholarship for a mathematics project that "advances the understanding of the mysterious relationship between different mathematical structures."



David Klein '98 and Van Le were married in November. David's ACS classmates Luke Sequiera (far right) and Rick Baum (back right) and his sister Amy Klein '01 were in the wedding party.

Photo credits

All photos are property of The Avery Coonley School, or were licensed or approved for use herein. The photo on page 3 is copyrighted by John Fedele and the photo on page 10 is copyrighted by Todd Pierson. Please send any questions about ACS photographs to cportman@averycoonley.org.

Production credits

Chris Portman

Editor

Cathy Pawlowski

Designer

Lake County Press

Printer

Avery Coonley School cares about the environment. This magazine is printed on recycled paper with soy-based inks.

©Avery Coonley School

The Avery Coonley School

1400 Maple Avenue, Downers Grove, Illinois 60515

NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
GURNEE, IL
PERMIT NO. 152

